



## Green Burial Council Board Member Expectations

Welcome to the Board of Directors for the Green Burial Council. We value the time and talent you bring to the board and plan to use it well. As trustees of this board, we look forward to partnering with you to ensure that your board experience is purposeful and supports both your volunteer expectations and the needs of the organization for strong governance and board leadership. We hope you will learn new things, share what you know, and join in the satisfaction of the Board's accomplishments.

As a Board member of the Green Burial Council, you are expected to:

1. support the mission, vision, and values of the organization
2. prepare for, attend, and actively participate in regular board meetings (currently conducted by teleconference for 90 minutes each month)
3. participate in Board member retreat orientation
4. attend retreats
5. promote and participate in planning and assessment activities undertaken by the Board, including strategic planning and implementation
6. actively participate in activities designed to enhance the board's performance (e.g., attend a local training program, participate in board development activities)
7. learn about and integrate the organization's history and achievements into current discussions; respect decisions made by previous boards; revisit when circumstances and changes require it
8. endeavor to understand and follow the requirements and spirit of a tax exempt 501c3 organization
9. be an ambassador for the GBC with donors, supporters, corporations, funding partners, and your network of friends and associates
10. remain mindful of public perception when representing the GBC, and exercise discretion in personal conversation, including social media
11. participate in fundraising activities
12. identify friends, associates, green burial advocates who might be prospective donors, committee members, or board members
13. adhere to conflict of interest, confidentiality, whistleblower and other policies
14. stay informed about board policies, bylaws, committee matters, and key organizational programs and initiatives
15. read and understand all the GBC financial statements; know what the budget is and actively review, approve, and monitor the budget and fundraising to meet it. As a board member you are fiscally responsible, with other board members, for this organization's financial responsibilities
16. ask questions when you have concerns or need more information
17. read, write and respond to email, discussions, and committee/project updates promptly
18. commit an average of ten hours a month minimum to fulfilling board responsibilities

19. serve a full term and successfully complete these responsibilities or, if unable to complete responsibilities, offer resignation

## **Your Rights as a Board Member**

The GBC wants all potential board members to know that they have certain rights. These include:

- full and proper training
- full disclosure before voting on any issue
- a safe and secure environment in which to conduct meetings
- to insist that the organization engage outside expertise when needed
- that the organization carry sufficient general liability and directors and officer insurance to ensure that the organization and the directors are indemnified against risk

## **Q&As for New Board Members**

Serving as a board member is one of the most challenging and rewarding of volunteer assignments. While appointment or election to a board is an honor, board members have important legal and fiduciary responsibilities that require a commitment of time, skill, and resources. Prospective board members do themselves a service and show that they are serious about the commitments they make by asking some basic questions before joining an organization's board. You can find the answers from the board member who issues the invitation to join; the board chairperson; other board members, current and former; or written materials. Long-time board members might also benefit from an organization review that answers these questions.

### **Q. How long is my term?**

A. 3 years usually, although some terms are designed to stagger so that not more than 1/3 of the board is rotating off in any one year.

### **Q. What is the work style of this board? Is it a "working" board where I will be expected to fulfill a role that might be done by paid staff in a larger organization? Is it an advisory board, where one gives input but not much else?**

A. The GBC is a working board. Each Director is expected to participate actively on committees, and take on board leadership duties as needed.

### **Q. How formal or informal is the board? How is the board structured?**

A. The board consists of up to 15 members. The President, Vice President, and Secretary make up the Executive Committee. A Treasurer may or may not be a member of the Board.

**Q. How are decisions made?**

A. The rules are incorporated into the Bylaws.

**Q. How and where are meetings held? Are they on site or virtual? How often does the board meet?**

A. Meetings are held monthly, for 1.5 hours each, through Zoom teleconference. Additional meetings may be required.

**Q. How is business conducted between meetings?**

A. Discussions occur on an on-line forum called Slack. For time-sensitive decisions, email may be used. Committees and project managers are expected to be conducting business between Board meetings.

**Q. How much time will I be expected to devote to board business?**

A. A minimum of 10 hours a month.

**Q. Is there a cost associated with serving on the Board? Are board members reimbursed for travel expenses? Is there an honorarium?**

A. The GBC is a completely volunteer board. Directors are expected to pay their own expenses in lieu of annual monetary donations as other nonprofit boards often require.

**Q. Will I be expected to be engaged directly in fundraising? What role will I play in soliciting donors?**

A. The Fundraising Committee oversees all fundraising efforts. Your participation in fundraising events is appreciated.

**Q. Is the organization financially healthy? Is the organization willing to disclose all of its financial information?**

A. The Treasurer is available to discuss financial questions.

**Q. Is there adequate directors and officers (D&O) insurance to protect board members in case of a lawsuit or other disaster?**

A. The GBC board is covered by D&O insurance to cover costs related to defense and liability exposure.

**Q. Does the organization have a good training program for new directors? What orientation will I receive to the organization and to the responsibilities of board service?**

A. New directors are given orientation materials and a workshop on technical tools, plus a chance to ask questions during the induction meeting.

**Q. How often do board members receive financial reports?**

A. Financial reports are located on Slack under Finances.

**Q. Whom does the organization serve?**

A. Both providers and the general public are served.

**Q. Are there descriptions of the responsibilities of the board as a whole and of individual board members?**

A. The document *Job Descriptions & Committee Charters* describes Director duties and expectations in the past. We are currently using a Project Management method of achieving our goals.

**Q. Are there descriptions of board committee functions and responsibilities?**

A. Our bylaws describe standing committees in detail.

**Q. How does the Board prevent conflicts of interest between board members and the organization?**

A. Directors must sign an annual disclosure statement, and again should a specific conflict arise. The procedure for handling potential conflicts is clearly written in the *GBC Conflict of Interest Policy*.

### **Questions Potential Board Members May Wish to Ask Themselves**

- What are the ways that you think I can contribute as a board member?
- How much of my time will be required for meetings and special events?
- How are committee assignments made?
- Does the organization provide opportunities for board development and education?
- Am I committed to the mission of the organization?
- Can I contribute the time necessary to be an effective board member?
- Am I comfortable with the approach and tone of the organization's fund-raising efforts?
- Can I contribute financial support consistent with the organization's expectations of board members and with my own means and priorities?
- Can I place the organization's purposes and interests above my own professional and personal interests when making decisions as a board member?